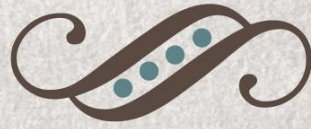


نتحدث عن رمضان
Let's Talk About
Ramadan



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About the Book: This book was compiled and organized according to the madhhab of 'Imām 'Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (d. 242). We summarized many issues in order to make it easy for the reader. The style, in which this book was written, was adapted from (the former 'Imām of Masjid 'Al-Ḥaram in Makkah) Shaykh Muḥammad bin 'Abdullāh 'As-Subayyal's (d.1434) book entitled “**A Friend on The Path.**” We thought this was an excellent way to introduce material, as it simplifies the information for the reader, so we attempted to emulate the manner in which the Shaykh authored his book and we titled it “**Let’s Talk About Ramaḍān.**”

This is summarized; therefore many issues were not included. Everything mentioned can be found in the books of the madhhab of 'Imām 'Aḥmad. We have also attached our references in case the reader would like to read further in hopes of gaining additional benefit. Our hope was to benefit the English speaking Muslims in the west with something that most people can relate to. If you have any comments or suggestions please contact us at: althamaraat@gmail.com

We ask 'Allāh to make our small efforts sincerely for Him, and we ask Him to put it on our scale of good deeds on The Last Day! Indeed, He is The One who hears and answers the Du‘ā'.

This is a publication of Al-Thamaraat.

Compiled, translated, and summarized by,
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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Introduction

All praise is for 'Allāh, we praise Him, seek His assistance, and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge with 'Allāh from the evil of ourselves and from the evil of our actions. Whoever 'Allāh guides, then there is none who can lead him astray, and whoever 'Allāh leads astray, there is none that can guide him. We bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except 'Allāh alone; without any partners. And we bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and messenger.

It is important for every Muslim to know and understand that the month of Ramaḍān opens the doors of goodness, and it makes the pathways to Paradise ('Al-Jannah) easy to obtain just as was stated by the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam. 'Abū Hurayrah, may 'Allāh be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam said, **“Upon the arrival of Ramaḍān the doors of Paradise are opened, the doors of the Hellfire are closed, and the devils are shackled.”**¹

The people of knowledge have explained *“the devils are shackled”* with numerous explanations. Some of the scholars say that *“the devils are shackled”* is a sign that there is no excuse for a person to disobey 'Allāh, The Most High. So it is as if it has been said, *“the devils have been held back from you, therefore don't use the devil as an excuse to leave off performing acts of obedience for 'Allāh, and don't use the devil as an excuse to commit sins.”*²

It has also been reported on the authority of 'Abū Hurayrah, may 'Allāh be pleased with him, that the messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam said, **“Whoever fasts Ramaḍān believing in 'Allāh, and desiring his reward from 'Allāh alone, will be forgiven for his previous sins.”**³

We ask 'Allāh to make us of those who strive during the blessed month of Ramaḍān, seeking His reward alone, and may the prayers and peace be upon Muḥammad, his family and all of his companions and those who follow him until the Day of Judgment.

¹ 'Al-Bukhārī #1899, Chapter – “What should be said, Ramaḍān or The Month of Ramaḍān?”

² For a further detailed explanation, please refer to Fath 'Al-Bārī by 'Ibn Hajar 'Al-‘Asqalānī, vol. 5, pgs. 229-231.

³ 'Al-Bukhārī #1901, Chapter – “Whoever Fasts Ramaḍān believing in 'Allāh...”

About the Book

This is a conversation taking place between Amir and Zayd. Amir is a new Muslim who has some questions about fasting in Ramaḍān. Zayd has a significant amount of knowledge regarding fasting as he was granted the opportunity to travel abroad and study 'Islām. On the Monday morning after praying Ṣalātal-Fajr, Amir's car wouldn't start. When Amir saw Zayd leaving the masjid, he asked Zayd if he could take him to work . . .

Amir: 'As-salāmu' alaykum yā Zayd, how are you and your family?

Zayd: Wa'alaykumus-salām waraḥmatullāhi wabarakātuh, we are fine, 'al-ḥamdu-lillāh!

Amir: Hey Zayd, I'd like to ask you a favor; my car broke down last night. Do you think you can take me to work?

Zayd: Sure, I'm off today...

Amir: Thanks, I really appreciate it.

Zayd: No problem.

Amir: Zayd, since I have you here, I have a few questions about Ramaḍān.

Zayd: Sure. We can talk about it on the ride.

Amir: Well, I'm a little nervous going into my first Ramaḍān. My wife and I are really scared and don't know what to expect. We've been trying to read everything we could get our hands on, but it doesn't seem to be enough . . .

Would you mind briefly explaining this whole Ramaḍān thing to me? We're still new to 'Islām and we're just not clear on some of the issues regarding fasting.

Zayd: Sure Brother, what would you like to know? I'm at your service.

Amir: For starters, what *is* Ramaḍān? I mean, this year Ramaḍān will fall in July. So do we fast the same time every year? And what's this business with 'Islāmic months? Please excuse me, but I really just don't understand.

Zayd: Okay Amir, let's take things step-by-step.

First, and the most important thing you need to know, Amir, is that our religion is established upon the oneness of 'Allāh and *not* associating partners with Him. So, if you fast or do any act of worship and that worship is not accompanied by *tawhīd* or making your worship sincerely for 'Allāh, then that action is worthless!

'Allāh, The Most High, says in the Qurān, **{Worship 'Allāh and do not associate partners with Him}**⁴ and 'Allāh says, **{Indeed 'Allāh does not**

⁴ Sūrah 'Al-Nisā', 36

forgive anyone who associates partners with Him, but He forgives other than that if He wills}.⁵ He also says, {And we will regard what they have done from actions as scattered dust}.⁶ Their actions will not have benefitted them.

Second, the people of knowledge mention that actions must contain sincerity to 'Allāh along with following the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam. This is a *serious* affair Amir and it is important to be mindful of this at *all* times.

In the first case, you could fall into *shirk* – meaning associating partners with 'Allāh – and in the second case you could fall into *bid'ah*, that is, innovation. We seek refuge in 'Allāh from both!

Amir: Woah, I appreciate the reminder! This is something that we've got to be conscious of.

Zayd: Okay, let's get back to answering your question. What you are used to is a solar calendar whereas 'Islām has its own *lunar based* calendar and Ramaḍān represents the 9th month of the 'Islāmic calendar. The months are determined by *Hilāl*; the sighting of a new lunar moon. So, in 'Islām, a month can only be 29 or 30 days. It's also important to note that when we discuss days in 'Islām to keep in mind that the night always precedes the day.

Amir: Hmm, interesting, but what do you mean the night precedes the day? Can you please explain?

Zayd: It works like this, when the Maghrib prayer comes in, this is considered to be the night of the following day. So, for example, if today is Thursday then when the sun sets for the Maghrib prayer, it is officially considered the night of Friday. Once the sun rises, then it will be considered to be the day of Friday . . . 'inshā'Allāh this is clear. It is important that you know this, especially as we start discussing the month of Ramaḍān.

Amir: Okay, I think I understand.

Zayd: Great! Now, Ramaḍān is the month that a person practices controlling his or her desires; hoping for 'Allāh's reward during this blessed month. By the way Amir, there is something that you must know about 'Islām. In 'Islām, we have rules and regulations, meaning, we have rules and regulations which are *derived* from the Qurān, the Sunnah, and scholarly consensus.

These three sources are commonly referred to as “*evidences*.” So, before you speak about the religion, make sure you have evidence from the Qurān, the Sunnah, or have a scholarly consensus that supports your statement. We should be fearful of falling into innovations of our religion so it's very important to be aware of these things. 'Ā'ishah, may 'Allāh be pleased with her, narrated that the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam

⁵ Sūrah 'Al-Nisā', 48

⁶ Sūrah 'Al-Furqān, 23

said, “Whoever introduces something into this religion that is not from it, then it will be rejected.”⁷

Amir: Thanks Zayd, I always hear people saying to follow the Qurān and Sunnah – and 'inshā'Allāh – that’s what I want to do.

The Obligation of Fasting Ramaḍān

Zayd: Okay, so where were we? Oh, so during the month of Ramaḍān it is obligatory for every Muslim to fast. It’s actually from the pillars of Islām. 'Allāh, The Most High, says in His book, {**So whoever witnesses this month (Ramaḍān) then he must fast**}.⁸

'Allāh also says, {**Fasting has been made obligatory upon you**}.⁹ In addition to that, the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam, said that **'Islām was established on five things and from them was the Ṣawm (fast)**.¹⁰

Amir: It sure is a relief that we have resources to return to in 'Islām. Our religion is beautiful. 'Al-ḥamdu-lillāh!

But wait, I have a small child, is he included in all of this as well? I mean, my son is only three years old. I would be afraid to have him fast.

Zayd: No Amir, your son is excluded from fasting. In 'Islām, there are conditions for the one who must fast.

Amir: Oh, really? What are they?

Zayd: There are some conditions that must be fulfilled in order for a person’s fast to be correct. The first condition is that a person must be a Muslim, so this would exclude non-Muslims. The second condition is that a person must be *bāligh*...

Amir: Sorry for cutting you off, but what is *bāligh*?

Zayd: *Bāligh* is when a child reaches the age of puberty. 'Islāmically, there are three signs for a boy and four signs for a girl and they are as follows:

- For a boy:
1. The arrival of sperm
 2. Growing hair on his underarms or his private areas and
 3. He reaches the age of 15.

These are the signs when a person becomes *bāligh* or reaches the age of puberty for a boy.

As for a girl, the conditions are the same except that she has her menses.

⁷ 'Al-Bukhārī and Muslim

⁸ Sūrah 'Al-Baqarah, 85

⁹ Sūrah 'Al-Baqarah, 183

¹⁰ 'Al-Bukhārī #8, Chapter – “Your Prayer and your Faith”

Zayd: So, here's a quick recap. A person must be Muslim, *bāligh*, that is, have reached the age of puberty, be mentally stable, have the ability to fast, and if a woman is on her menses, she must complete her menses prior to fasting. The same applies for a woman with regards to postpartum bleeding.

Amir: Subhān'Allāh! 'Islām is very detailed!

Zayd: Yes it is, and there are more things to consider. When a person is going to fast, he must make his intention to fast the night before the actual day that he will be fasting.

Amir: This has to do with the whole day and night thing? Am I Right? I'm confused . . .

Zayd: Okay, for example, it's time for the Maghrib prayer on Monday night and we're breaking our fast right?

Amir: I'm with you so far.

Zayd: Okay, so Maghrib starts the beginning of what is considered to be *Tuesday* night because the night comes before the day, remember?

Amir: Ah, alright. I see now.

Zayd: So you must set your intention for fasting the next day starting from Ṣalātil-Maghrib. So, when you break your fast at Maghrib, you need to make your intention to fast the next day. Remember, you can make your intention at any time between Maghrib and the 'Adhān of the Fajr prayer. It was reported by Ḥafṣah, may 'Allāh be pleased with her, who said that the messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam said, **“Whoever doesn't make his intentions to fast the night before, then there is no fasting for him.”**^{11 12}

Okay, so here is everything again.

1. A person must be Muslim.
2. Age of discernment or reach the age of puberty
3. A woman must not be on her menses or have postpartum bleeding.
4. Have intentions to fast an obligatory fast (such as Ramaḍān) from the previous night.

Zayd: Are these issues clear?

Amir: Yes, they're clear. I really appreciate you taking your time to explain these things to me, but I've still got some more questions if you don't mind?

¹¹ 'Abū Dāwūd and 'Al-Tirmidhī, also this can be found in *Saḥīḥ 'Irwā' 'Al-Ghalīl*, vol. 3, pg. 25 #914.

¹² Some of the scholars differ on the understanding of this issue. 'Imām Mālik holds that that a person can make the intention at the beginning of the month to fast the entire month. For more information on this, please see *Nayl 'Al-Mārib*, vol. 2, pg. 107.

Zayd: No problem.

Amir: Okay, here it goes: When does the actual fast begin? When do we break our fast and start it? I'm slightly confused about this issue; could you expound on it a little more 'inshā'Allāh?

Zayd: Okay, you are not allowed to eat beginning from the second Fajr or prior to dawn until the sun sets.

Amir: Second Fajr? There's *two*?! What's that?

Zayd: There is a Fajr that looks like the time is coming in for the prayer, this is called *Fajr 'Al-Kādhīb* which means a false Fajr.

And the second Fajr is what 'Allāh is referring to in the Qurān when He says, **{And eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of the night) then continue your fasting until night (sunset)}**.¹³ This verse is referring to you eating until you see this thread.

However, this was explained by the people of knowledge that this thread may not even be seen if you live in a city or if it's cloudy. So, in this case it may be better to go by the local times in the masjid where you live when they call the 'Adhān for Fajr. 'Allāh knows best!

Amir: Is there anything that I should know about breaking my daily fast?

Zayd: Yeah, there are some things to consider. We should rush to break our fast at sunset which is called *Futūr* in Arabic. And, we should also eat until the latest possible time prior to Fajr and this is called *Suhūr*.

This is due to the statement of the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam, when he said, **“My nation will be upon goodness as long as they delay the Suhūr (food prior to dawn) and hasten the Fitr (food for breaking the fast).”**¹⁴ Also, it is from the Sunnah for you to break your fast with specific types of dates.

Amir: Suhūr and Futūr, got it. What are the different types of dates?

Zayd: It was explained by one of the professors¹⁵ in the University that dates have different names. They are *Balah* (unripe dates), *Rutab*, and *Tamar*.¹⁶ He explained that *Rutab* (dates) are moist and generally lighter in color; they are considered ripened dates. This is the type that the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam, mentioned first when breaking your fast.

¹³ 'Al-Baqarah, 187

¹⁴ 'Aḥmad, vol. 5, pgs. 146 and 172, however part of this narration is said to be unauthentic: “delay the food for *Suhūr*” in this Ḥadīth. Shaykh 'Al-'Albānī mentioned this in his *Saḥīḥ 'Irwā' 'Al-Ghalīl*, vol. 3, pg. 31 #916. However, having said that, there are numerous authentic narrations other than this one which indicate how it is recommended to delay the food for *Suhūr*.

¹⁵ Dr. Muhammad bin Sa'ūd 'Al-Harbī, former head of the Department of Judiciary Law at Umm Al-Quraa University.

¹⁶ See provided photos in Appendix for further clarity.

Zayd: The other type is a *Tamar* (date) which are the more the conventional ones that we find here in America. They're usually not moist and generally darker in color and sometimes they are dried.

Amir: That's interesting. I've never heard anyone explain that before.

Zayd: Yeah, neither did I, until I – like yourself – actually asked about it. It was narrated that the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam used to break his fast with the *Rutab* (moist dates) prior to praying (Maghrib). If there weren't any moist dates, then he would break his fast with *Tamar* (generally dried or less moistened dates). And if there weren't any *Tamar* then he would drink some water.¹⁷

Recommend Actions for the Fasting Person

Amir: 'Al-ḥamdu-lillāh, I will definitely try to do that. What are some other things that I can do to gain more reward for during this month?

Zayd: Increase in doing good deeds! Good deeds, such as reading the Qurān and reflecting on its meaning. As you'll find many people will read the entire Qurān in this month.

You see Amir, the Qurān is broken down into 30 parts, so if you read one part each day, 'inshā'Allāh by the end of Ramaḍān you will have completed the entire Qurān at least one time. Likewise, if you were to read two parts per day, then by the end of Ramaḍān you would have read the entire Qurān twice!

Also, you may want to increase in prayer, making Du'ā' and giving in charity. These are some of the many things that you can do to gain additional reward.

Amir: Well Zayd, honestly, sometimes I get into arguments at work. I don't think I'll get any additional reward for winning an argument! How could I avoid getting into arguments with people?

Zayd: Well, try to remember 'Allāh as much as possible and remember that the reason you're fasting is because you're seeking 'Allāh's reward.

There's a narration that the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam said, **“When the day of fasting comes for any one of you, do not indulge in marital relations during the day, and do not argue (with the people). So, if someone curses you (or argues with you) or even fights with you, then you tell them, ‘I am fasting.’”**¹⁸ Perhaps if you were to tell a person that you were fasting, this would possibly relieve some of the tension between the two of you.

¹⁷ 'Abū Dāwūd #2358, Graded as authentic by Shaykh 'Al-'Albānī.

¹⁸ 'Al-Bukhārī #1904, Chapter – “Do you say, ‘I am fasting?’”

Accepted Excuses for Not Fasting

Amir: I'll definitely have to try that 'inshā'Allāh. But what if I don't feel like fasting a few days, is that Okay? I mean it *is* my first Ramaḍān; I'm not sure if I can go the *entire* 30 days?

Zayd: It is incumbent upon you to fast the entire month! While there are some instances where a person does not have to fast, however, they must make those days up at another time.

Amir: What does that mean, to “make the days up at another time?”

Zayd: That means that after the completion of Ramaḍān, you must fast for the days you missed during Ramaḍān. May 'Allāh reward you for your diligence in wanting to please Him.

I'll mention for you a list of things that are considered to be valid excuses. Please write them down as they are extremely important!

1. If a woman is having her monthly cycle or having postpartum bleeding, she doesn't have to fast, but she *must* make those days up at a later date.

This is due to the narration of 'Ā'ishah, may 'Allāh be pleased with her, when she said “We were commanded to make up the fast (for those days were missed from monthly bleeding) and we weren't commanded to make up the prayer (that we missed from monthly bleeding).”¹⁹

And postpartum bleeding takes the same ruling as the monthly cycle in this issue. Thus, there is a scholarly consensus that it is impermissible for a woman to fast during those days of bleeding.

2. If a person needs to break his or her fast in order to save themselves or someone else from drowning, for example, or a severe harm or even possible death, then it is obligatory for them to break their fast; as some of the people of knowledge mention.

¹⁹ Muslim #335, Chapter – “Knowing the two Rak‘ahs.” There is also a scholarly consensus that the women are to make up those days missed from fasting up.

We got a nice benefit from Dr. Abdul Majeed bin Muhammad As-Subayyal, Umm Al-Qura University Department of Judiciary Law Professor, who said regarding *Hāshīyah Rawḍ 'Al-Murbi'*, “When 'Abd 'Al-Raḥmān bin Qāsim mentions 'Al-Wazīr, he was referring to 'Al-Wazīr bin Hubayrah (d. 560).” We asked because we ran into trouble Identifying 'Al-Wazīr, as there are quite a few by the same name mentioned from the people of the past

'Al-Wazīr. (d. 560) mentioned that it was a scholarly consensus and Muwafaq bin Qudāmah (d. 620) mentioned that he didn't know of any differing among the people of knowledge. The 'Āyah that's used for evidence is what 'Allāh, The Most High says, **{So whoever from among you is sick or is traveling then make your (days for fasting) at a later date}** Sūrah 'Al-Baqarah, 184. The meaning here it to break your fast and eat; taken from *Hāshīyah Rawḍ 'Al-Murbi'* by Abd 'Al-Raḥmān bin Qāsim (d. 1392).

These people can make up their fasts at a later date. 'Allāh mentions in the Qurān, **{And do not throw yourselves into destruction}**.²⁰ This would also include a person working a very difficult job and due to its extreme circumstances, he cannot stop working, fearing that fasting will cause him great difficulty or severe harm; he can break his fast and make it up at another time.²¹

However, if this is not the case (causing him severe harm) and he leaves off fasting, then he has committed a sin. This is the statement of the 'Islāmic Jurists (scholars of Fiqh).

Amir: Wow, let me take all of this in. 'Islām gives such great detail to some of these issues. I didn't realize things could be made so easy.

Zayd: 'Al-ḥamdu-lillāh, Amir, 'Allāh has really made our religion easy to practice; we just need to take the time out and learn so we can implement properly. May 'Allāh give us all the ability to learn our religion! Now let me continue because there is more.

Amir: No problem Zayd, you drive and I'll write.

Zayd: So, also from the valid excuses are the following:

3. If a person is traveling, then it is permissible for him to break his fast but he has to make it up later.
4. This ruling also applies to a sick person who fears that fasting will cause him harm. 'Allāh says in the Qurān, **{So whoever from among you is sick or is traveling then make up your (days for fasting) at a later date}**.²²

There are other valid excuses, but these the most common.

Amir: Well, I have a question, my wife is pregnant with our second child, and I'm not sure if she should fast or not. What should she do?

Zayd: If she fears for herself or her child by fasting in Ramaḍān, then she should break her fast; she just has to make it up. Her situation is like that of the sick person that doesn't *have* the strength to fast *or* fears that they will cause harm to themselves. 'Allāh says, **{So whoever from among you is sick or is traveling then make up your (days for fasting) at a later date}**.²³ The same goes for a woman that is breastfeeding.

Amir: Okay, I see.

²⁰ Sūrah 'Al-Baqarah, 195: In the exegesis of 'Abd 'Al-Raḥmān 'Al-Sādi, he mentions that destruction here is of two types. The first type is to leave off that which 'Allāh has commanded you with if leaving it off will necessitate physical harm to a person's body or the soul. The second type is doing something that will lead to the harm of a person's physical body or the soul.

²¹ The statement of 'Al-Ājry (d. 360) can be found in *Kitāb 'Al-Furū'*, vol. 4, pg. 437 from 'Ibn Muflīḥ (d. 763).

²² Sūrah 'Al-Baqarah, 185

²³ Sūrah 'Al-Baqarah, 185: This was taken from *The Permanent Committee of Scholars*, vol. 10, pg. 220

The Things That Will Nullify Your Fast

Zayd: Now Amir, there are some things that will break your fast as well if you're not careful. Some people are oblivious to them.

Amir: Myself included! Like what?

Zayd: They are as follows:

1. Bleeding due to the menses or postpartum bleeding nullifies the fast and the fast should be made up at a later date. For example, a woman begins the day fasting, but then throughout the course of the day she receives her monthly cycle. We mentioned this previously. Do you remember?

Amir: Of course, I remember, I wrote it down. You said, “this is due to the narration of ‘Ā’ishah, may ‘Allāh be pleased with her, when she said, **‘We were commanded to make up the fast (for those days we missed from monthly bleeding) and we weren’t commanded to make up the prayer (that we missed from monthly bleeding).’**”²⁴

Zayd: Mashā‘Allāh, you learn and write fast. Excellent, so let us continue:

2. If a person is determined to break his fast, meaning he has the intention to break it even if he didn’t eat anything. This nullifies his fast.
3. Intentionally causing oneself to vomit nullifies your fast as well. The Messenger of ‘Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam said, **“Whoever is overwhelmed by vomiting (then he doesn’t break his fast) however, whoever causes himself to vomit intentionally, then they must make up their fast.”**²⁵
4. Swallowing phlegm will also nullify your fast because there is not any difficulty in removing it. As far as spit, then this doesn’t nullify your fast because it is something that is common in the mouth; similar to saliva.
5. Anything that reaches the stomach either through your mouth or your nose breaks your fast. However, if a person eats something forgetfully, then this doesn’t break their fast. The Messenger of ‘Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam said, **“If a fasting person eats or drinks something forgetfully, they should continue their fast, for indeed ‘Allāh gave them food and drink.”**²⁶

²⁴ Cf. #10

²⁵ ‘Abū Dāwūd #2382, Chapter – “Fasting and Intentionally Causing Oneself to Vomit”

²⁶ ‘Al-Bukhārī #1933, Chapter – “Fasting when Eating or Drinking Forgetfully”

Amir: I don't know which to thank you for more; the ride or the info. I *really* appreciate the time you are spending with me. I have another question, well, let's say it's a little personal, am I allowed to be intimate with my wife while we are fasting?

Zayd: That's actually a *great* question! There are things that you can do and things that you cannot do while fasting. I will mention for you the things that you cannot do which nullifies your fast.

1. If you continuously look at your wife in a flirtatious way, to the point where you actually ejaculate, then this breaks your fast. However, if you experience pre-ejaculation then it doesn't break your fast.
2. Masturbation also breaks your fast. If a person masturbates and ejaculates, this is a sin and it also breaks his fast. If a person doesn't ejaculate then this is still considered to be a sin and is impermissible.²⁷

Amir: Well, thanks for your candidness!

Zayd: There is no shyness when it comes to learning about our religion. These are affairs that people deal with on a daily basis and we need to have some knowledge of them. By the way, since we're on this topic, we must discuss the issue of if a person has intercourse with their spouse during this month of Ramaḍān while they're fasting. There is no problem with having intercourse during the evening and throughout the night until the designated time for fasting the following day arrives, but remember, intercourse during the daytime has been *strictly* prohibited.

Amir: Is there some type of penalty for having intercourse with my wife during the daytime in Ramaḍān?

Zayd: Absolutely, a person must free a slave (however there are no slaves nowadays), so if he is not able, then he has to fast for *two* consecutive months, and if he is unable to do that, then he must feed *sixty* poor people and also make up that day of fasting.

Amir: Subḥān'Allāh! That's pretty detailed. How did you get one slave, two months and sixty people? How would a person know to do these things if this were to happen to him?

Zayd: This is due to the narration of the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam, when a man came to him and said, “**Oh Messenger of 'Allāh, I am destroyed!**” So the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam said, “**What happened!?**” Then the man replied, “**I had intercourse with my wife while I was fasting.**”

²⁷ Please refer to *Kashāf 'Al-Qanā'* and *Manār 'Al-Sabīl*, in the chapters dealing with things that will break your fast.

“The Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam said, “Are there any slaves you can free?” He said, “No.” So he, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam said, “Are you able to fast two consecutive months?” So he replied “No.” The Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam said, “Are you able to feed sixty people?” So the man said, “No.”

Thereafter, the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam sat there for some time until he was given a branch that contained (*Tamar*) dates on it. Then he, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam said, “Where is the questioner? Here, take these dates and feed the people with them.”

The man replied by saying, “Feed these dates to people poorer than me oh Messenger of 'Allāh? By 'Allāh, there is no one between these two mountains (in Madīnah) that is poorer than my family and I.” Upon hearing this, the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam laughed; he, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam, laughed to the point that his canine teeth or eye teeth began to show and said, “Feed it to your family.”²⁸

Amir: What a beautiful story. I guess we need to be extra careful. Fasting two consecutive months really sounds difficult.

May 'Allāh protect us from falling into that.

The Virtues of the Last Ten Nights of Ramaḍān

Amir: I keep hearing everyone saying the last ten nights of Ramaḍān are approaching.

Is there something special happening that I should know about that is going to happen during these last ten nights?

Zayd: The last ten nights of Ramaḍān are the best nights of the entire month. The Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam, would strive harder to perform good deeds than he would during the rest of the month during these last ten nights.

Zayd: It is reported on the authority of ‘Ā'ishah, may 'Allāh be pleased with her, **that the prophet, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam, used to strive and work harder in his worship during the last ten nights more than he would throughout the remainder of the month.**²⁹ This is because this signifies the approaching closure of this virtuous month and it is hoped that a person will benefit from Laylatil-Qadr.

Amir: So I need to work harder during these last ten nights? Go all-out?

²⁸ 'Al-Bukhārī #1936, Chapter – “If a Person has Sex in Ramaḍān and Doesn't Have Anything to Give in Charity”

²⁹ Muslim #1175, Chapter – “Striving During the Last Ten Nights of Ramaḍān”

Zayd: Definitely! The best example is the example that of the Prophet, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam, left for us. The Messenger, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam, would increase in his voluntary prayers, as he would stand in prayer for the majority of the night, lengthening his standing, bowing, and prostration. ‘Ā’ishah, may ‘Allāh be pleased with her, also reported **that when the last ten nights of Ramaḍān came, the Prophet, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam, would tighten his ‘Izār (lower garment), bring life to the night and awaken his family.**³⁰

Amir: Tighten iz-what? Bring life to the night?

Zayd: What is meant by “to tighten his ‘Izār” is that he would refrain from having intercourse with his wives and focus on worshipping ‘Allāh, The Most High. And “bringing life to night” meaning he would stand in prayer, making *Dhikr* of ‘Allāh, reading the Qurān for the majority of the night, and he would also wake up his family at night to stand in prayer. These narrations show the virtues of the last ten nights as the prophet, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam, increased in his diligence during these nights.

Amir: Sounds like this is the wrong time to slack off, Brother Zayd.

Zayd: Amir, this is the time to put forth as much as an effort as you can and seek your reward from ‘Allāh. Don’t forget, it is upon the Muslim to follow the example of the Messenger, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam, and to spend these nights worshipping ‘Allāh, and not spend the night in laughter or indulging in “he said, she said.”

‘Al-‘I’tikāf

Amir: Okay, so what’s this I’ve been hearing about sleeping in the Masjid during these last ten nights. Do I really have to sleep in the masjid?

Zayd: Māshā‘Allāh, you’ve got a lot of good questions.

Amir: I just want to know what I’m supposed to do so that my wife and I can have the best Ramaḍān possible ‘inshā‘Allāh.

Zayd: No problem brother, I’ll try to help you as much as I can. When you hear people referring to spending the night in the masjid during these last ten nights, this is called *‘Al-‘I’tikāf*.

Amir: I’ll-take-off?

Zayd: No, not like that. Like this: ‘I’-ti-kāf. What is meant by *‘Al-‘I’tikāf* is to remain in the Masjid all day and all night for the sole purpose of performing different acts of worship for ‘Allāh, The Most High.

³⁰ Muslim #1174, Chapter – “Striving During the Last Ten Nights of Ramaḍān”

Zayd: 'Al-'I'tikāf is a Sunnah of the Messenger, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam, but it isn't obligatory. It is reported on the authority of 'Ā'ishah, may 'Allāh be pleased with her, **that the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam used to perform 'Al-'I'tikāf during the last ten nights of Ramaḍān up until his death and then his wives performed 'Al-'I'tikāf after his death.**³¹

Amir: What is the purpose of staying in the Maṣjid? Can't I just worship 'Allāh at home or somewhere else? Is it mandatory or a condition that I worship 'Allāh *in* the Maṣjid?

Zayd: The purpose performing 'Al-'I'tikāf is so that a person can be free at all times to make *Dhikr* (remembrance of 'Allāh), recite the Qurān, or any other form of worship he chooses to perform. So, a person remains in the Maṣjid in order to free himself from anything that may distract him with regards to his worldly affairs and he totally busies himself with the worship of 'Allāh, The Most High.

Amir: Wow. That makes sense. So staying in the Maṣjid basically cuts down on things that may distract me from worship?

Zayd: Exactly . . .

Amir: That sounds like a beautiful opportunity. 'Inshā'Allāh, I'm going to make my intentions for 'I'tikāf!

Zayd: An important note is that it should not be made except in a Maṣjid wherein the daily congregational prayers *as well as Ṣalātal-Jumu'ah* are established. So, if a person performs the 'I'tikāf in a Maṣjid and the congregational prayers or *Ṣalātal-Jumu'ah* isn't prayed in *that* maṣjid, then his 'I'tikāf will not be correct.

Amir: You lost me on that one. Break it down.

Zayd: This is for two reasons:

Firstly, he will remain in a Maṣjid performing 'Al-'I'tikāf which means he will be leaving off the congregational prayers and this is impermissible. Therefore, it is not okay to do something impermissible (i.e. leaving off the congregational prayers) seeking the reward for something that is only recommended (i.e. performing 'Al-'I'tikāf).

Amir: Okay, I didn't think about that.

Zayd: Secondly, he would have to constantly leave the Maṣjid to go to another one in order to pray with the congregation, and with this constant leaving and returning to the Maṣjid he defeats the purpose of performing *staying in the Maṣjid*, that is, 'Al-'I'tikāf.

³¹ Muslim #1172, Chapter – “'Al-'I'tikāf During the Last Ten Nights of Ramaḍān”

Amir: I can pronounce the word and now I understand the concept too! That actually makes a lot of sense.

Zayd: So, the person who wants to perform 'Al-'I'tikāf must know that he isn't supposed to exit the Masjid at all during this period except for necessities which could be using the bathroom, making Wuḍū' (ablution) for the Ṣalāh. Maybe even to bring in food for the people who are making 'Al-'I'tikāf, assuming that they aren't able find anyone else to bring in food for them. Other than these situations or an emergency situation, a person should make the intention to remain in the Masjid at all times busying him or herself with worship.

Laylatul-Qadr (The Night of Qadr)

Amir: I was told that during the last ten nights there is one night that I don't want to miss. I think the brother said it was something like 1,000 nights in one night, but I didn't really understand what he was saying. Have you heard anything about this?

Zayd: Yes, this night is called Laylatal-Qadr. Laylatul-Qadr is a great night that falls in the month of Ramaḍān. 'Allāh, The Most High, praised *this night* in the Qurān and he described it as having great characteristics saying, **{The month of Ramaḍān in which the Qurān was revealed as a guidance for mankind}**.³² So, this 'Āyah shows that the Qurān was revealed during the month of Ramaḍān.

'Allāh, The Most High, also said in another 'Āyah, **{Indeed We have sent it (i.e. The Qurān) down in the night of Qadr}**.³³ Again, in another 'Āyah, **{Indeed we have sent it down in a blessed night}**.³⁴ So, if we look at all of these 'Āyāt we see that the Night of 'Al-Qadr falls in the month of Ramaḍān.

Amir: Okay, but how do we know this night will fall during the last ten nights of Ramaḍān?

Zayd: The Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam, specified that this night will be from among *the odd nights* during the last ten nights of Ramaḍān. It is reported that he, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam said, **“Strive to attain Laylatal-Qadr during the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramaḍān.”**³⁵

Amir: What makes this night so special?

³² Sūrah 'Al-Baqarah, 185

³³ Sūrah 'Al-Qadr, 1

³⁴ Sūrah 'Al-Dukhān, 3

³⁵ 'Al-Bukhārī #2017, Chapter – “Searching for Laylah 'Al-Qadr on the Odd Nights of The Last Ten Nights”

Zayd: There are many benefits and virtues of this night. For example, 'Allāh mentioned in the Qurān, **{Laylatul-Qadr is better than one thousand months}**.³⁶

Amir: Ah, now I've got the evidence for the thousand months! But what does that even mean?

Zayd: The meaning of this 'Āyah is that Laylatal-Qadr is better than one thousand months with regards to its virtue, reward, and blessings that 'Allāh, The Most High, placed in this night for the person who worships Him during that night. For this reason, the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam said, **“Whoever stands in prayer on Laylatal-Qadr believing in 'Allāh and seeking the reward from 'Allāh, they will be forgiven for their previous sins.”**³⁷

Amir: Subḥān'Allāh! I would love to stand in prayer on that night.

Zayd: Another virtue of Laylatal-Qadr is that the angels descend to the earth on this night and when the angels descend they come with goodness, blessings and mercy. Due to the diligence of the Muslims in their obedience to 'Allāh, along with their striving in worshipping Him, the angels descend with mercy and blessings. 'Allāh, The Most High, said, **{Therein descend the angels and Jibrīl by the permission of 'Allāh with all decrees}**.³⁸

Amir: 'Allahu'akbar!

Zayd: And another virtue of Laylatal-Qadr is that 'Allāh, The Most High, revealed an entire chapter in the Quran discussing this great night, and this chapter will continue to be recited until the Day of Judgment.

Amir: Really? An entire chapter has been revealed discussing this night?

Zayd: Yeah, it's called Sūratal-Qadr and it's the 97th chapter in the Qurān. 'Allāh, The Most High said, Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm **{Indeed We have sent it (i.e. The Qurān) down in the night of Qadr. And what will make you know what the night of 'Al-Qadr is? The night of 'Al-Qadr is better than one thousand months. Therein descend the angels and Jibrīl by the permission of 'Allāh with all decrees. Throughout that night there is peace until the appearance of dawn}**.

Amir: So all of these things you mentioned take place in this one night! Lā 'ilāha 'illAllāh! 'Islām is a beautiful religion.

Zayd: Yeah, we need to thank 'Allāh for his many blessings! In summary, a Muslim should strive and be diligent in worshipping 'Allāh during the month of Ramaḍān increasing in worship during the last ten nights seeking the reward from Him, The Lofty and The Exalted. One should spend these nights in prayer, making Dhikr (i.e. remembering 'Allāh), reading the Qurān, seeking

³⁶ Sūrah 'Al-Qadr, 3

³⁷ 'Al-Bukhārī #2014, Chapter – “The Virtue of Laylah 'Al-Qadr”

³⁸ Sūrah 'Al-Qadr, 4

'Allāh's forgiveness and other acts of worship. On the contrary, one should stay away from too much joking, laughter, being involved in he said she said and anything else that could potentially distract him from his ultimate goal which is to worship 'Allāh sincerely seeking His reward.

Amir: Māshā'Allah! I really appreciate you helping me out. I have a few more questions before you drop me off at work, is that alright?

Zayd: No problem, the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam said, “None of you truly believes until you want for your brother what you want for yourself.”³⁹ I just want you to, bi'idhnillāh, have the most beneficial Ramaḍān you possibly can.

Zakātul-Fiṭr

Amir: Aren't we supposed to give some type of charity during Ramaḍān? I'm not really sure what that is . . .

Zayd: *Zakātul-Fiṭr* is a charity that has been made obligatory upon the rich and the poor, however, the obligation upon the poor person depends on whether he has enough provisions to last him a day and a night. If he has enough to last him during that time frame, he is obliged to pay *Zakātal-Fiṭr*.

Amir: So what does *Zakātal-Fiṭr* have to do with Ramaḍān?

Zayd: *Zakātul-Fiṭr* is a purification for the fasting person due to his or her sins via speech or any other actions. In addition to that, it is also sustenance for those who are less fortunate. So, as you can see, in paying *Zakātal-Fiṭr* is a great benefit.

Amir: How do I pay the *Zakātal-Fiṭr*?

Zayd: The Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam, legislated that the amount that is to be given to the needy for *Zakātil-Fiṭr* is a *Ṣā'* of dates, wheat, barley, raisins, or cottage cheese.⁴⁰

However, if a person doesn't have these different types of foods, then he should feed the people with whatever the norm is for food in his particular country or city of residence.

Amir: How much is a *Ṣā'*?

Zayd: A *Ṣā'* is the equivalent four *'Amdād*, that is, the plural of *Mudd*. A *Mudd*, is a form of measurement and if you don't have an exact means of getting this form of measurement then some of the people of knowledge mention that you can put both of your hands together and you will have an approximate *Mudd*.

³⁹ 'Al-Bukhaaree #13, Chapter – “From 'Īmān is to Love for Your Brother What You Love for Yourself”

⁴⁰ 'Al-Bukhārī and Muslim

Zayd: This isn't 100% accurate, but it's a rough estimate that give you a general idea of what it is so four of those handfuls, *'Amdād*, would be a *Ṣā'*. Also, some of the scholars say that a *Ṣā'* is about 2.2 kilos of rice or about 4.85 pounds. However, a *Ṣā'* of wheat, obviously, will be less than that, especially if we're using handfuls. So please be aware of this.

Amir: How do I put my hands together?

Zayd: Well, you cup both of your hands together to get a Mudd.

Amir: Okay, I see. And when should I actually give out the *Zakātal-Fiṭr*?

Zayd: Distributing *Zakātal-Fiṭr* doesn't become obligatory until the night of the *'Īd*, meaning after sunset and the night before the actual *'Īd* prayer.

Amir: Wait a minute, I'm confused . . .

Zayd: In other words, it is permissible to distribute *Zakātal-Fiṭr* the night before the Eid by one or two days. This is due to the actions of some of the companions of the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam, however, the best time to distribute *Zakātal-Fiṭr* is immediately before the *'Īd* prayer.

How Do I Know if I Have to Pay Zakātal-Fiṭr?

Amir: So does everyone have to pay the *Zakātal-Fiṭr* or just the rich people?

Zayd: Well, it is obligatory to pay *Zakātal-Fiṭr* if you have that which suffices you and your household as it relates to food for the day and night of the *'Īd*. So a person begins by paying *Zakātal-Fiṭr* for himself.

He would pay what is equivalent to one *Ṣā'* for himself, then he pays for those whom he supports, as in his wife, children, and his parents. So for each person under his care he will distribute one *Ṣā'* for each person. It has also been legislated that he pays for an unborn child with the condition that the pregnancy has reached at least four months.

What is the *'Īd*?

Amir: Shukran. Now, I've been hearing people talk about the *'Īd*, but I'm really not clear on what the *'Īd* is.

Zayd: Alright, I'll try to give you a brief history on the *'Īd*. The *'Īd* is a reoccurring celebration that takes place every year. Every religion has its own form of celebration. The people of Al-Madīnah (i.e. before 'Islām) had two days of celebration, wherein, they would act rather foolishly.

'Islām came with something different from the practices in the pre-'Islāmic period, likewise, something different from the practices of the Jews and the Christians. This differing distinguished 'Islām and its' rituals and rulings (from other religions). Is that clear so far?

Amir: Yes, I'm with you.

Zayd: So when the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayh wasallam migrated to 'Al-Madīnah, he found the people had two celebrations during their pre-Islāmic days. So he, ṣallallāhu 'alayh wasallam said, **“Indeed 'Allāh has substituted (pre-'Islāmic celebrations) for you, with two celebrations (in 'Islām) that are better than them (the celebrations of the pre-'Islāmic period), they are the days of 'Al-Aḏḥā and 'Al-Fiṭr.”**⁴¹

These two celebrations are in conjunction with two tremendous forms of worship (Ramaḏān and Ḥajj). 'Īd 'Al-Fiṭr corresponds with the conclusion of Ramaḏān whereas 'Īd 'Al-'Aḏḥā signifies the conclusion of standing on 'Arafāh (during Ḥajj). And 'Arafāh is the most important days of Ḥajj. It also represents the 9th day of Dhul-Ḥijjah which is the 12th month of the 'Islāmic Calendar.

Amir: Wow, thanks for the information about 'Arafāh. 'Inshā'Allāh, someday I will be able to make Ḥajj. So, the 'Īd everyone is talking about is 'Īd 'Al-Fiṭr?

Zayd: Yes, 'Īd 'Al-Fiṭr.

How to Pray Ṣalātal-'Īd (The 'Id Prayer)

Amir: Is this 'Īd prayer performed like the rest of the daily Ṣalawāt or is there something special we have to do in this prayer?

Zayd: The 'Īd prayer consists of *Rak'atayn*, two units of prayer and the prayer is to be prayed prior to the *Khuṭbah* (sermon). You must make the *Takbīratul-'Iḥrām* which is the opening saying of 'Allāhu 'Akbar because that marks the beginning of your prayer.

Amir: Okay.

Zayd: Now remember, this opening *Takbīratul-'Iḥrām* is obligatory, hence, without it, your prayer is incorrect.

Amir: That's standard procedure for Ṣalāh, what makes this one different?

Zayd: Once you have done that, then it is a Sunnah that you make *Takbīr*, meaning you say 'Allāhu 'Akbar, six additional times after your initial *Takbīratul-'Iḥrām*.

Amir: So, I'm going to say 'Allāhu 'Akbar a total of seven times, correct?

Zayd: Yes. This is for the first unit of prayer, *Rak'ah*. In the second *Rak'ah*, you are to make five *Takbīrāt* (i.e. saying 'Allāhu 'Akbar). While doing so, you should raise your hands each time you say 'Allāhu 'Akbar; this would include raising your hands in the first *Rak'ah* as well as the second and so on.

⁴¹ 'Abū Dāwūd #1134, Chapter – “The Two 'Īd Prayers”

Zayd: This is a general description of the prayer and since you'll be praying with the congregation you'll follow the 'Imām in regards to what he will recite during the prayer.

Amir: Oh, here's my job right here, Zayd.

Zayd: Okay, 'inshā'Allāh we'll talk later.

Amir: May 'Allāh grant you a beautiful reward. I really appreciate the patience you've explained to me this morning. May 'Allāh bless you! 'As-salāmu'alaykum!

Zayd: Wa'alaykumus-salām waraḥmatullāhi wabarakātuh!

The End

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Appendix



Tamar Dates

They are generally less moist and sometimes are dried.

Rutab Dates

They are softer and moist.

Balah Date

It's not ripe yet and it's hard. When you eat it it's like biting into an apple.

The Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam used to break his fast with the *Rutab* (moist dates) prior to praying (Maghrib). If there weren't any moist dates, then he would break his fast with *Tamar* (generally dried or less moistened dates). And if there weren't any *Tamar* then he would drink some water.⁴²



Above: Both are *Tamar* Dates. As can be seen there is some drying on the left one. The one on the right is slightly darker.

Top-Right: A *Balah* Date which still hard and has not become ripened as of yet.

Bottom-Right: *Rutub* Dates are moist.



⁴² 'Abū Dāwūd #2358, Graded as authentic by Shaykh 'Al-'Albānī.



The *Mudd* is a measurement that is used to measure *Zakāh 'Al-Fitr*. Four *'Amdād* (Mudds) are equal to One *Ṣā'*.

A *Mudd* is essentially two normal size hands placed together to form a cup.

Depicted here is a *Mudd* of the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam.

This one can actually be traced back to Zayd bin Thābit, may 'Allāh be pleased with him, who obtained it from the Messenger of 'Allāh, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam.

